

Interagency Wildfire Management Team
Meeting Notes
August 28, 2002

Carey Bare (Ecology Group, LANL) announced that, at the conclusion of the IWMT meeting, there will be a short meeting of LANL employees directly involved with the Cerro Grande Rehabilitation Project to discuss plans and updates for completing the final year of the CGRP. Consideration will be given to optimizing the treatment prescriptions to minimize the effects of high beetle mortality in both the ponderosa pine forests and piñon-juniper woodlands at LANL.

Jim Streit (Fire Protection Group, LANL) announced that extreme wildfire hazard conditions have returned to the Los Alamos region. This is evidenced by the presence of two fires that are currently burning in the Jemez Mountains. To assist the continuation of safe outdoor operations at LANL, Jim indicated that the fire hazard matrix that guides such operations is in effect.

Rob Farris (Fire Protection Group, LANL) reported that a contracting firm for Los Alamos County has begun working on water tanks that are located on LANL property. As such, mutually agreeable safety plans must be in place.

Joe Romero (Nuclear Materials Science Group, LANL and Cochiti Pueblo) and Debra Welsh organized a meeting to discuss the options for reducing the increased fire hazards at the Pueblo that are related to high rates of mortality in piñon woodlands. A second meeting will be held on Thursday, August 27, to discuss a long-term plan to address this mortality-fire hazard problem.

Randy Balice (Ecology Group, LANL) continues to conduct sampling for wildfire hazard conditions and vegetation structures at permanent plots in the Los Alamos region. Currently, 47 plots have been sampled this year. This sampling will continue through September and include recently thinned plots at S-Site, mixed conifer plots in canyons at LANL, and high elevation plots, both burned and unburned, on Forest Service property, at the Bandelier National Monument and at the Valles Caldera National Preserve. Randy also reported that a public meeting was conducted by the Los Alamos County Extension Office at the Fuller Lodge last Wednesday to discuss the high rates of mortality that are currently occurring in forests and woodlands of the Los Alamos region. The presenters generally concluded that the high current rates of beetle mortality are driven by dry climatic conditions. Treatment options are readily available only to high value trees, and include applications of water and pesticides.

Fran Talley (Public Affairs Office, LANL) offered to draft a News Bulletin article discussing the fire hazard matrix and its guidance for LANL outdoor operations.

The next IWMT meeting will be at 9:30 AM on Wednesday, September 11, at TA-21, Building 210 in the Conference Room (142). The IWMT meets every other week and these meetings are open to the public. Contact Randy Balice (balice@lanl.gov, 665-1270) for further information, or to get on the distribution list for these meeting notes.